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MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY COUNCIL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

FROM: COUNCILMEMBER TREVOR OZAWA *TO*

SUBJECT: 2017 RAIL-VOLUTION CONFERENCE TRIP REPORT

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HONOLULU, HAWAII

From September 17 to September 20, I attended the Rail-Volution Conference in Denver, Colorado.

This is my trip report with details of my attendance at the conference with accompanying information.

Toured the B-Cycle Bike Share Program

I toured the Denver B-Cycle Bike Share Program located in the main city portions of the Denver business district and the Lower Downtown areas. Compared and contrasted the B-Cycle program to Honolulu's Biki program. One notable difference as of now was that B-Cycle does not have a "free spirit" program like Biki which is just an allotment of minutes useable whenever the customer chooses.

Toured the Lower Downtown (LoDo) Denver Area and Multimodal Options

Walked up and down the streets of Lower Downtown Denver and the business district to view and use various modes of transportation. There is a free bus that runs up and down 16th Street pedestrian mall that is very similar to Fort Street Mall in concept but much larger, more established with many more businesses and greater in length with more activation of the surrounding areas with higher density up and down the streets. Toured the street level at-grade rail options available throughout this dense area and noted the benefits as well as some safety and traffic considerations. I also rode on the free bus that ran from Union Station to the conference hotel.

Toured Union Station

Toured the newly renovated Union Station that serves as a transportation hub and economic force for the Denver area. There are several new economic opportunities now at the hub such as new restaurants, a new hotel and economic opportunities as collateral enhancements from the updated station. A new bus hub also is very clean, useful, and was tastefully designed to incorporate the great regional bus system for Denver. It is something that we could possibly do at Middle Street with our buses and handivans by building something special at the Middle Street location here in Honolulu and it could be so much more than it is today.

Various Workshops

- *Displacement, Gentrification, and TOD: A Done Deal?*
 - Discussed several case studies to see effects of TOD and gentrification on displacement. Debated the idea of whether transit infrastructure investments lead to gentrification and displacement. Discussed issues similar to what is happening somewhat in Honolulu and in particular the Chinatown area where there is a struggle of transit infrastructure being seen as displacing locals that have been in the area for many decades and in some ways disrupting the way things have been. Discussed pros and cons and ways in which longtime residents and business owners can be helped by infrastructure upgrades to make it a win-win for all. Need to have clearly communicated shared goals that are able to evolve to achieve the intended goals of better transit related infrastructure.
- *Successful Public-Private Development: How [Not] to Do It*
 - Discussed whether it is possible to have successful public-private developments and the difficulties some transit agencies have struggled with to identify properties eligible for joint development, then struggle some more to solicit and evaluate development proposals.
- *Developer-Driven Infill Stations: Just Ask*
 - Very informative workshop with real case studies on successful public-private partnerships that led to great projects being completed in a win-win fashion using less taxpayer dollars. Looked at mixed use developments that created jobs and new business and economic development growth through unique partnerships at multiple levels of government and the private sector. Learned about an incredible new Boston Landing station in Boston, MA was created in partnership with New Balance Athletics, Inc. and MBTA. Also learned about a unique development in Japan and Denver with Panasonic using smart city technology to create a better transit oriented development neighborhood that also helps with job creation and economic success.
- *Air Rights, Overbuild and Transportation Assets: Making Them Work*
 - Discussed three case study scenarios from New York, Boston, and various places in California that discussed how rail yards, stations, lines, and highways positioned in the heart of communities create sizeable holes in the urban fabric but they present great opportunities as well. Explored transportation operations, design criteria, policy and guidelines.

We heard what roles maintenance of operations, the use of air rights and the overbuild design played in negotiations and planning, creating benefits for all. Boston, San Francisco, Philadelphia and New York all initiated programs to overbuild and revision assets, converting space into productive, vibrant and profitable multi-use districts and facilities. Took home strategies to create mutual benefits by overbuilding and leveraging transportation assets, both rail and roadway.

- *Meeting with Denver Regional Transportation District*
 - Discussed various issues related to Denver Regional Transportation and engaged in a question and answer procedure as to learn from some of the issues we are encountering in Honolulu. Very knowledgeable director that was able to provide insight on problems often times with contractors and RFPs that ignore high cost incurring issues such as running into infrastructure buried below the surface and failing to take into account such cost increasing events.
- *Discussion on Autonomous Vehicles*
 - Discussed the importance of autonomous vehicles for the future of municipalities and various ways in which autonomous vehicles could be a very useful tool that may not be currently considered in transit planning. Honolulu needs to at the very least consider and study implications, benefits and burdens associated with autonomous vehicles.

Toured Denver Zoo

Toured the Denver Zoo and surrounding park area. The Denver Zoo cost \$17 to enter for an adult. It was opened in 1896 and is owned by the City and County of Denver and funded in part by the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District. It has a beautiful and accessible front entrance at the zoo with clear branding throughout that shows the zoo is dedicated to upholding a high standard of marketing and branding through its use of consistent artwork themes and logos incorporated in various means such as maps, receptacles, signage, and gifts. Many sponsorships used to fund many aspects of the zoo including the Toyota elephant passage. Attended numerous hands on experiences and opportunities to engage with zoo customers as well as to educate the zoo customers on conservation efforts and tips to take home about being conscious of the animals and their habitats. This was another example of a zoo that can serve as an example for the Honolulu Zoo and I am hoping to implement some of the same things I saw there at the Honolulu Zoo.

